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Careers in Intelligence

By Peter Edson



A NEW career in foreign intelligence work is now being opened to a select group of honor graduates from U. S. colleges.

Central Intelligence Agency on July 9 will begin a specialized training course for its first class of about 100 of these "selectees." All the students have been hand-picked from the top 10 per cent of this June's crop of graduates. CIA now plans to run three such courses a year.

About 60 per cent of each class will have A. B. or B. A. degrees. The other 40 per cent will have M. A. or Ph. D. degrees. Eighty per cent will be men, 20 per cent women. Starting pay will run as high as \$4600 a year for qualified Ph. D.'s.

The course will start with a concentrated six to eight weeks in Russian language. New teaching methods, employing tape recordings in spoken Russian, followed by the student thru earphones, will be used, to cram the course down. Being able to read Russian newspapers is now a first requirement for intelligence work.

After this will come other concentrated courses in rapid reading, report writing, and mastery of the tools of the intelligence trade. Then finally the trainees get six to eight weeks of instruction in research methods.

Selectees will be under rigorous scrutiny during this basic training. Immediate objective of the course is to fit them for jobs in CIA. But the long-range objective is to make foreign intelligence work a career, with a definite future and ample security for retirement.

BACK of this idea is a story. When Lieut. Gen. Walter B. Smith, now director of CIA, came home from France after World War I, he thought he might like to get into intelligence work. It was then primarily the business of military attaches. He went to

the head of G-2, the Army Intelligence Service, and asked for assignment. He was asked only one question: "How much private income do you have?"

Gen. Smith, who was then Second Lieut. Smith, had to answer that he had only his Army pay. He didn't get the job. For the concept of an intelligence officer in those days was of a man who could afford to live high as an attache abroad, and pick up gossip in upper-crust society.

So the young lieutenant who couldn't get a job in G-2 in 1920 ends up 30 years later as the head of America's top intelligence agency, getting the job the hard way. One of his principal interests since has been to raise intelligence work to the level of a career service. His reason is simply that he wants to attract to CIA the best brains available.

GEN. SMITH has called in as his director of training Col. Matthew Baird, wartime C. O. of the 13th Air Force Service command. Col. Baird is a graduate of Princeton and Oxford and former headmaster of a boys' school. His system for finding good intelligence material is unique.

After basic training by CIA, the selectees will get two years of experience in various CIA offices. They will then become eligible to compete with regular CIA employees for rotating tours of duty in a career corps.

One special group in whom Gen. Smith intends to take an active interest will include those who, after 15 years or so of varied intelligence work, show special ability. They will be the future heads of divisions, deputy directors and directors of CIA.

Every director of a division in CIA will each year be expected to designate 1 per cent of his staff for this general career corps. Employees who may have been overlooked in the career selection may compete once a year for places in the corps by taking special educational testing service exams.

It is from this system that Gen. Smith hopes to give the United States a professional intelligence career service, for the first time in its history.